



# **BITS OF GOLD**

## **Montana Talking Book Library**

Regional Library of the National Library Service  
For the Blind and Physically Handicapped  
(NLS/BPH)

**Volume 106, Number 3**

**September 2006**

**Librarian's Log:** from the desk of Christie Briggs, Regional Librarian

### ***An Extraordinary Person and Volunteer***

At the Montana Talking Book Library, it is a given that all volunteers are special. However, twenty-three years ago, a woman by the name of Lea Blunn came to volunteer. Her first passion was reading--everything! Lea shared with us that as a child, she was confined to bed with an illness and began a lifelong interest in reading. She found our recording program to be a place where she could bring her love of reading to others. Lea's commitment to her family of nine children and her husband, Herb, was unmistakable. It was the background experience of her well-known "no nonsense" way of organizing recordings and other volunteer tasks. She narrated forty-four books, starting in 1982 with her monitor, Dr. Eileen Finley. The stand-alone rickety booth was nothing to brag about then. Eileen had to shout instructions of "start!" and "stop!" to Lea, who was recording inside the booth. As a team, they were considered the backbone of the fledgling recording program from 1982 until 1993 when Eileen passed away. These two comprised one of our best recording teams and were instrumental in training the many who have followed. In 1994, a day before Lea's birthday, a new state of the art Recording Studio was dedicated by former Governor Racicot. It housed a monitor booth dedicated in Eileen's name and a narrator booth dedicated to Lea. Lea was present at the ceremony and received many accolades. She continued recording and monitoring until her passing in June, 2006. Lea led the crowd in many ways and received many awards for her accomplishments as a volunteer, in and out of the recording booth. Her greatest reward was bringing her love of reading to you, our patrons. Job well done, Lea!

### **In Honor of Lea Blunn**

We have received many memorial donations in Lea Blunn's honor. The staff has unanimously recommended that annual purchase of Montana books to be recorded in our studio will be dedicated in Lea's memory.

### **Summer Activities at MTBL**

We are grateful to say that once again, the Montana Association for the Blind's Summer Orientation Program invited us to teach a daylong class about the Montana Talking Book Library, our books, machines and services. Lee Madison and Sandy Stanton gave outstanding instructions and tips on our services as well as answered many questions from students.

**Voting Made Easier!**

New voting machines should help patrons with limited sight or dexterity vote independently and privately this November in Montana. A new machine lets voters use a touch screen, a Braille keypad, or a “sip/puff” technology to enter and verify their votes. Once the voter approves, the AutoMark machine marks a ballot that’s the same paper ballot used by all voters. Many polling places are also being made “ADA accessible” with the focus on parking, ramps, and entry improvements such as wider doors and accessible door hardware being added. These efforts have included the Governor’s Office, the Secretary of State’s Office, the Montana Advocacy Program and many, many other dedicated and interested private, local, and state organizations and individuals.

**2007 Legislature**

As we head into the Legislative session for 2007, we will keep you informed of activities affecting the operation of our library and the services we offer you.

Best Regards, Christie Briggs

**EQUIPMENT CLINIC—WHY REWIND?**

Each cassette book is opened and examined when it is returned. The books are checked for completeness, for damage, and to see if all tapes have been rewound. You can play an important role in maintaining good quality service by rewinding every cassette when you have finished reading it. Dr. Lee says, “Place the cassette Braille side up and push the rewind button.” Placing the tapes in the box in the proper order will also save time. Rewinding and correct placement can prevent damage to the tapes while in transit. Your help in caring for the cassettes is a valuable asset and is greatly appreciated.

**COMMERCIALLY RECORDED BOOKS**

The National Library Service is purchasing more commercially recorded audio books in order to get books to patrons faster. In the past, it has sometimes taken as long as one year after a book is published until it is recorded and ready for distribution to Talking Book patrons. NLS changes the commercial tape speed to 15/16 ips, adds a four-track format and side announcements before distributing to libraries. Many of these books may also have background music.

## WHITE CANE DAY

The white cane used by blind and visually impaired people in many countries was invented in 1930 by George Bonham of the Peoria, Illinois, Lions Club. Instruction in the use of white canes is taught by schools for the blind. This includes explanations of “white cane laws” which state that motorists must yield the right of way to the blind and visually impaired. On White Cane Day, October 15, the library, along with the Lions Clubs of Montana and the Montana Association for the Blind will increase motorists’ awareness in following Montana’s laws to yield to white cane users.

## SUMMER READING PROGRAM

The 2006 summer reading program, “Paws, Claws, Scales and Tales” wrapped up August 15. With the guidance of Reader Advisor Sandy Stanton, six young readers fulfilled their personal contracts and other activities. They read a total of 70 books, winning prizes and certificates. Look for more information for young readers in the upcoming *Little Bits o’ Gold* newsletter.

## PATRON PICKS

RC 50276 In a Sunburned Country by Bill Bryson (humorous account of author’s travels in Australia)

RC 52432 The Kill Artist by Daniel Silva (mystery)

RC 58272 The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America by Russell Shorto (US History)

## HOLIDAYS

The library will be closed on the following days:

Monday, Oct. 9	Columbus Day
Tuesday, Nov. 7	Election Day
Friday, Nov. 10	Veterans’ Day
Thursday, Nov. 23	Thanksgiving Day
Monday, Dec. 25	Christmas Day
Monday, Jan. 1	New Year’s Day



## RESOURCES OF INTEREST

- The 2007 MAB calendar is available at the library for \$3 each. Contact Christie Briggs at 1-800-332-3400.
- The American Council of the Blind has teamed up with Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston to launch a nationwide survey of the health of blind women, with focus on the breast cancer risk. For more information, call 1-888-828-4294 or call Christie or Janet at 1-800-332-3400.

**Montana Talking Book Library  
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Helena, MT 59620-1800**

**Free Matter for the Blind**

**Address Service Requested**

**This newsletter is available on cassette, e-mail and large print upon request or visit our website: <http://msl.mt.gov/tbl>**

**LIBRARY HOURS:** Mon-Fri 8am-5pm  
**PHONE NUMBERS:** 1-800-332-3400  
**WEBOPAC:** <http://klasweb.msl.mt.gov>  
**STAFF NAMES & EMAIL ADDRESSES**  
**REGIONAL LIBRARIAN:**  
**COORD. VOL SVC / RECORDING**  
**PROG. DIR:**  
**COLLECTION MANAGER:**  
**MACHINE LENDING AGENT:**  
**READERS' ADVISORS:**

Patrons with last names A-G contact:  
Patrons with last names H-O contact:  
Patrons with last names P-Z contact:

**BITS OF GOLD EDITOR:**

**For patron requests or contact information, e-mail us at: [mtbl@mt.gov](mailto:mtbl@mt.gov)**

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(in Helena) 406-444-2064

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